



Celebrating Our Community

Reaching out to varied communities in a variety of ways

At the South Florida Water Management District, diversity is an integral part of what we do. A stroll through the halls at headquarters offers a glimpse into a world where people of various heritages have come together, all striving to accomplish one vision: to be the world's premier water resources agency and thereby preserve the region's most precious resources.

This diverse culture mirrors the communities we serve, and is reflected in the many minority outreach initiatives designed to carry our water-related messages into south and central Florida's rich mosaic of communities. During February, Black History Month, we are featuring a few of the recent outreach events and activities that the District sponsored or supported.

District Outreach Efforts Applauded

The South Florida Water Management District was presented with the *Corporate Spirit of Progress Award* on November 20, 2002 during the *9th Annual Regional Excellence Awards Gala* at the Royal Palm Crowne Plaza in South Beach. The hosts of this event, Tony and Woodie Lesesne, chairman and president of *In Focus Interactive* magazine, presented the award to District Governing Board Member Gerardo Fernández. The award-winning magazine focuses on "technology, innovation, leadership and diversity." Other corporations nominated include Royal Palm Crowne Plaza, Homestead Miami Speedway, JM Family Enterprises, Nova University, AT&T and Office Depot. The award went to the organization or entity that illustrated the most changes in its corporate culture and dealings with the business community.



(Left to Right) District Business Outreach Coordinator **Sandra Hammerstein**; District Public Information Director **Jo Ann Hyres**; *In Focus Interactive* magazine President **Woodie Lesesne**; District Governing Board Member **Gerardo Fernández**; District Deputy Executive Director **Alvin B. Jackson, Jr.**; and District Procurement Analyst **Aldwyn Thomas**.

Community Meetings and Publications Broaden Reach

The District has made a concerted effort to reach more of south Florida's African-American residents, students, churches, businesses and community leaders by holding workshops, meetings and open forums in local communities and schools. Cooperative partnerships with Florida Memorial College, Florida Gulf Coast University and several community colleges also focus on providing greater educational and outreach opportunities. Another initiative involves the placement of advertisements and news articles in minority-owned newspapers, magazines and business periodicals in order to provide water-related information to a broader African-American audience.



Fostering Community Leaders



(Left to Right) District representatives **Toni Jackson**, Ft. Lauderdale Field Station; Okeechobee Field Station Director **Lindel Williams**; Governing Board Member **Pamela Brooks-Thomas**; Lead Outreach Specialist **Charles C. Scott II**; Intergovernmental Outreach Specialist **Lorraine Crawl**; Staff Outreach Specialist **Tammy Moore**; and SFWMD Broward Service Center Director **Michael E. Jackson**.

On December 13, 2002, the African-American Environmental Leadership Council (AAELC) hosted a recognition and networking event entitled, "Nature's Partners for Progress," at the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center in Fort Lauderdale. The center opened its doors in September 2002. The center's debut was celebrated in part with a parade and a host of other events. District board members and staff were active in supporting the new center.

The AAELC works to engage the African-American community in environmental initiatives. Charles C. Scott II, a District employee, was named AAELC's *Public Outreach Specialist of the Year* for 2002.

A West African dance performance and drumming with Ndakhte (*below*) was one of several cultural entertainment performances at the African-American Environmental Leadership Council's recognition and networking event.



Water Conservation "Round Up"

Students at the Village Academy in Delray Beach gather around District mascot Freddy the Friendly Alligator, to learn about water. Freddy was joined by Rodeo Bill and together they delivered an important message: water conservation is important for people and for the animals that share the world with us.

Remembering a Historic Leader

Freddy the Friendly Alligator, the District's mascot, sits atop an airboat parade float at a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade. Several parade-style events are held annually in communities throughout south Florida to honor the memory of the slain civil rights leader. Each year, to both support these diverse communities and share information about the importance of our shared water resources, the District participates in a number of events honoring Dr. King.



Honoring the Past

In 1928, a hurricane swept through south Florida. It was the third largest natural disaster in the history of the United States, claiming close to 3,000 lives. Six hundred seventy-four of those who died in the disaster were stacked into a mass grave site in West Palm Beach without proper burial. Most of those in this mass grave were black victims.

More than 70 years later, the Storm of '28 Memorial Garden Coalition is working to build a storm education facility and memorial on the site of this mass grave – to honor and remember those who are buried there. The District is a member of the coalition, and was recognized by the Palm Beach County School Board for its production of a brochure, *Field of Memories in the Wake of the Storm of '28* and a video about the Storm of '28.